

Two more self-help exercises

Activity 2: Focusing on the great things about yourself

Write a list of all the good things about yourself. Write everything, no matter how small it may seem.

It can be a bit tricky to think of things sometimes, so you could ask a friend or someone in your family to help you out!

If your child can speak, you can even ask them what they like about you or if they can't speak, imagine what they might say about their mum.

Thinking about the following questions might also give you some good ideas:

What do you like about yourself?

What do your friends and family like about you?

What have you achieved?

What are some of the skills or talents you have?

Some examples might be:

- Good mum
- Can juggle lots of things at once
- Friendly
- Good listener
- Reliable
- Fun to be around
- Good friend
- Chatty
- Independent
- Good at playing with your baby
- Loving
- Creative
- Thoughtful
- Good netball player

For each positive thing, write down specific examples of when you have used that quality.

Some examples to get you thinking:

Friendly:

- I had a chat to another young mum at the doctor's today. We were both in the waiting room with our babies and I started to chat to her.

Good at playing with my baby/child:

- I had lots of fun playing with Ethan on Tuesday. We started playing peek-a-boo and he was laughing and smiling at me.
- I went outside with Chelsea and Jackson yesterday and ran around in the background with them. They loved it!

Can juggle lots of things at once:

- I am good at juggling all the things I have to do, even if I get tired sometimes. On Sunday I cooked some meals for the week, watched TV with Maddy and did the washing. It felt good to get lots of stuff done.

Creative:

- I took lots of different photos of baby Amber and made them into a collage to stick up on the fridge.

It can be hard to think of examples but once you start writing it down it gets a bit easier.

As a mum, a lot of the stuff you do every day is good. Just being with your baby is showing that you are loving and caring.

Feeding or bathing your baby is showing that you are a good parent. Doing the washing up or washing is showing you are a hard worker!

You don't have to be on the website to do this activity you can keep a little diary or notepad and write good things you've done as soon as you do them or when you think of them.

Activity 3: Being your own best friend

We are often very hard on ourselves when something goes wrong and blame ourselves even if it's not our fault.

But we would never talk to a friend the way we sometimes talk to ourselves. Here's an example:

Carly couldn't get her little boy Jake to stop crying. He was screaming and screaming and she didn't know what to do. She felt crap about herself and was thinking that she was a bad mum. She was also thinking that all her friends are good mums because they know how to make their babies stop crying. She didn't know what to do and thought she was stupid. However, if Carly had a friend come to her and tell her a similar situation, she wouldn't say to them 'oh that happened because you're a bad mum'.

She might say things like:

- Don't worry, it's not your fault
- It happens to me all the time, it happens to everyone
- That's a normal part of being a mum
- These things take practice!
- How about we go out for a coffee to take your mind off it

The point is, we wouldn't say all the horrible things we say and think about ourselves to a friend, so we should say them to ourselves.

So when things go wrong, instead of thinking bad things imagine you are giving advice to your best friend or another mum! You'll be surprised how good it makes you feel.

Here's an activity to get you started!

Think of a time in the last couple of months when you felt crappy or down about yourself then answer the following questions:

What was the situation?

Examples include: when you didn't know how to do something with your baby, you had a fight with your mum or you did something embarrassing at a party.

How did they make me feel?

Examples include: feeling stupid, hopeless or sad.

What things did I say to myself during or after this situation?

Examples include: I'm a bad mother, I'm a shit friend, it's all my fault, I wish I was better at this.

Now write what you would say to a friend if they came to you in the same situation?

Examples might be: don't worry, you'll forget about it in a couple of weeks, let's go out and do something fun, it wasn't your fault, it happens to everyone!

Whenever you are feeling bad about yourself, it's a good idea to do this activity. It helps you to be nicer to yourself and changing the way you think about something will change the way you feel.

Mums have a big job so they shouldn't be too hard on themselves.

Seeking professional help (for low self-esteem)

Low self-esteem can sometimes be part of a bigger problem like depression.

If your self-esteem is affecting your life, like stopping you from looking after your child or seeing your friends, it can be good to go to the doctor or psychologist to talk about it and work out a solution.

REMEMBER: Self-esteem can be changed!

Get more information on how to get help from a professional:
www.ivebeenthere.org.au